

# sugarcreek vineyard & winery

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## newsletter

Fall 2017

## 2017 Sugar Creek Vineyard and Winery Happenings

The weather during the winter of 2016-2017 was warmer than previous years. The average temps for December through March were all above average with February being the warmest on record since keeping records from 1871. We were concerned that bud break might come earlier which could put the vines at risks if the warmer weather was followed by a late frost like in 2013. That year March was so warm that most fruit plants budded and then on April 12/13 we had a 2 nights of a killing <27°F. You couldn't even find apples that fall. But this year all worked out OK. April was more seasonal and bud break hit at the expected date ranges.

As mentioned in the 2016 Fall Newsletter, we replaced ~25% of the Traminette with a hybrid developed at the University of Minnesota, Brianna. This was our "second leaf" and we were not expecting to harvest any fruit. But when clusters began growing we pruned back to one cluster per shoot which worked out very well and on August 11 we harvested just over 700 pounds. We held about 15 gallons of Brianna juice out from fermentation and added that back to the fermented Brianna which resulted in a semi-sweet wine (~<3g/L RS) with fruity notes and a distinctive pineapple aroma.

In March we received our 2017 Chilean juice, Cabernet, Malbec and Merlot and also bottled the 2016 wines.

The annual Indy International Wine Competition held at Purdue University was moved from its historical July date to late May. Sugar Creek Winery entered six wines into the Non-Commercial (Amateur) Classification and we're happy to say all six medaled. The 2015 Zinfandel took Gold, 2016 Traminette Silver and the 2016 Marquette, Malbec and Sauvignon Blanc all got Bronze.

The 2016 Estate Grown Chambourcin Rosé took a Double Gold and also won the "Non-Commercial Wine of the Year"!



This happens when all of the judges award the wine a gold medal, that gives it Double Gold status, which then puts it in competition with all other Double Golds. This year there were 239 non-commercial entrants from 16 states and 19 won Double Gold. Out of these 19 SCW Rosé won the top wine. This is like a dog show, first wining Best of Breed then Best of Show.

Also at this year's competition, I participated as a "Judge-in-Training" in the Commercial Division. This was quite an experience that allowed me to sit at the table with real judges and taste wines, score them, and then discuss the ratings. My vote did not go into the final tallies but it afforded me the opportunity to observe and compare my scores with others who had been in the business much longer than me to see if I was picking up on the tastes of each wine. Here is a picture of a flight of red blends we judged.



Meanwhile back in the vineyard:

After winning the **Wine of the Year**, we decided to change our strategy on the Chambourcin and engineer the vines to produce grapes that would produce a nice rosé rather than a dry red wine. This means less pruning to produce slightly lower sugar level, then pressing immediately after crush to producing a lighter red/pinkish color. This worked out, we got the sugar content we planned but the color on the 2017 Chambourcin is slightly darker than the 2016 even though we pressed just 20 hours after picking.

The rest of the 2017 harvest was good but lower in tonnage than 2016, 3.5 tons vs. 5.5, respectively. However the Brix (sugar), pH and total acidity (TA) were better.

Looking forward:

Now to the update on the activities on the commercial front. We have been looking for a location for the tasting room for over three years. While looking we have been building finished goods inventory to support our anticipated sales volume. The plan has always been to find a spot where we live in or around downtown Carmel. Carmel is located ~20 miles due north of Indianapolis in Hamilton County. Carmel has received several national awards which include:

- 2017 - Best Small City in the U.S. to Raise a Family - [SmartAsset](#)
- 2017 - Best Place to Live in America by [NICHE](#)
- 2016 - Best small cities for families in America - [NerdWallet](#)
- 2016 - No.1 Safest City to Raise a Child by [SafeWise](#)
- 2014 – No.3 Best Places to Live, CNN Money Magazine

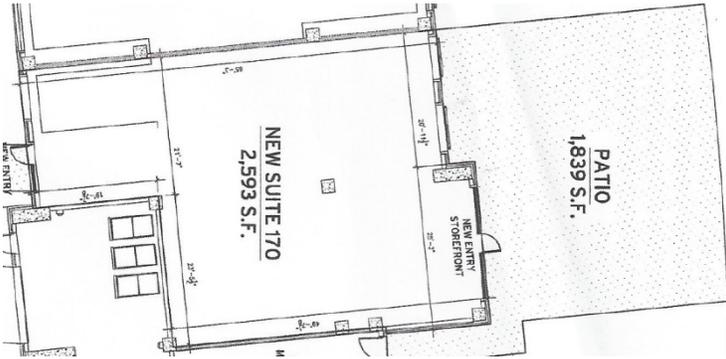
After locating and evaluating several places, we are finalizing negotiations on a spot that is part of new construction of a building called the Olivia on Main which has retail space on the ground floor and 250 condos and apartments on the 2-4 the floors.



The property features and demographics will certainly support the winery tasting room we are planning.

- Centrally located in Carmel;
- Adjacent to >6.5MM sq ft of office space
- Highest avg. household income in State, \$128K in 5 mi. radius
- Daytime population >71K in 3 mile radius
- >2,000 residential units in development

This space will build out to ~2,650 sq ft with a 25 ft tasting bar and comfortable inside seating for over 50. The outside patio will accommodate another 30-35 for our 6+ months of good weather. The patio will also have a fire pit and waterfall feature to promote the look and feel of our Sugar Creek namesake. If all continues to go as planned, build out construction should begin in early 2018 with commercial operations commencing in May.



Once we have established the tasting room, work will finish on the Wine Club and plan to start shipping in the fall of 2018.